

Planning the Future for San Juan Islands and Protection Island National Wildlife Refuges

Pamela Sanguinetti, Annette de Knijf*
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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The San Juan Islands and Protection Island National Wildlife Refuges provide nesting habitat for more than 75% of the seabird population of Puget Sound and important breeding areas for marine mammals. In addition, these 84 islands, rocks, and reefs provide important stopover habitat for migratory birds and most are included in the wilderness system. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service faces the challenge of managing these sensitive species and wilderness habitats in a region where human populations are continuing to grow. Looking to the future, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is developing a Comprehensive Conservation Plan to serve as a guideline for management of the two refuges for the next 15 years. This presentation reviews Refuge management and current research activities and identifies some of the most imminent threats to their biological integrity. We encourage a wide range of agencies, tribal governments, conservation organizations, and concerned people to help identify the main issues affecting the refuge and suggest how they can be resolved.